

Article Alert

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NEW ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

Handbook of Independent Journalism, July 2006



Journalists in a free society not only have certain legal protections, they also have responsibilities. In some countries, these responsibilities are spelled out and in others they are implicit. But in almost every case they amount to the same thing: to keep citizens informed, journalists have a responsibility to provide information that is accurate and reported fairly and independently from outside influences.

This handbook offers a brief introduction to the fundamentals of journalism as it is practiced in democratic systems — a journalism that attempts to base itself on fact and not opinion. Opinions have their place, but in the best-edited newspapers they are confined to the editorial pages and op-ed (guest writer) columns. This book is to provide a useful and practical guide that will help all journalists do better work for the communities they serve.

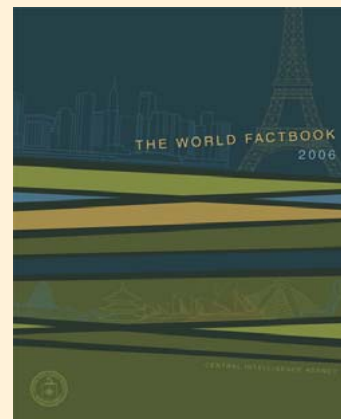
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CIA - The World Factbook - 2006

The World Factbook is an annual publication by the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States with basic almanac-style information about the various countries of the world. The factbook gives a two- to three-page summary of the demographics, location, telecommunications capacity, government, industry, military capability, etc, of all U.S.-recognized countries and territories in the world.

There have been some significant changes to the latest edition of The World Factbook .

To download the fulltext of the e-publication, please visit:
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The 61st Anniversary of Indonesian Independence Day



...On August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered. The Indonesian leadership, pressured by radical youth groups (the pemuda), were obliged to move quickly. With the cooperation of individual Japanese navy and army officers (others feared reprisals from the Allies or were not sympathetic to the Indonesian cause), Sukarno and Hatta formally declared the nation's independence on August 17 at the former's residence in Jakarta, raised the red and white national flag, and sang the new nation's national anthem, Indonesia Raya (Greater Indonesia). The following day a new constitution was promulgated. Source: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/idthoc.html>

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Hill, Steven HOW TO MINIMIZE MONEY'S ROLE IN POLITICS (National Civic Review, Summer 2006, pp. 17-28)

The author, who successfully spearheaded efforts to publicly finance political campaigns in Northern California, argues that public financing is the most promising form of campaign finance reform because it levels the playing field and gives candidates an incentive to accept spending limits. With public financing poorer candidates can challenge well-funded ones, enlivening the debate and opening up the system. It also removes the burden of fundraising. But while Hill believes public financing is currently the best solution, he argues that it is not enough. He points to the example of Arizona, which had a 97 percent incumbency rate in 2004 elections, despite public financing. Hill concludes that money alone does not control the outcome of elections residential patterns and electing legislators by electoral map are also factors. The solution is to use proportional representation, free media space and public financing.

2. Kamieniecki, Sheldon NAVIGATING THE MAZE: CORPORATE INFLUENCE OVER FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL RULEMAKING (Environment, vol. 48, no. 5, June 2006, pp. 8-20)

The author, dean of social sciences at the University of California at Santa Cruz, notes that because of the stalemate in Congress over environmental and natural resource policy in recent years, business interests and environmental groups have made increasing efforts to influence the rulemaking process at federal agencies as a way to change existing policy. Kamieniecki provides an overview of the rulemaking process at several federal agencies, and describes a study of the treatment of several important environmental laws during the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. He notes that the study's results do not suggest that business or environmental groups had undue influence over the rulemaking process; better indicators would be the type of rules initially proposed, the ideological and partisan makeup of appointees in federal agencies, and pressure to alter scientific findings. Kamieniecki believes that a stronger effort must be made not to inject politics into scientific data, which would unduly influence public policy.

3. Perlman, Ellen WARNING: E-VOTING AHEAD (Govern-ing, July 2006, pp. 44-46)

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requires doing away with old voting equipment and replacing it with electronic voting machines. Perlman discusses the security of electronic ballots, noting that, as long as voting has been in existence, "security of ballot boxes has been an issue." The author looks at the pros and cons of several electronic voting machines, including the touch-screen type that has generated controversy due to its potential vulnerability, to the optical-scan system that has a backup disk. In order to insure reliability and usability, election officials need to check and secure voting machines diligently.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND TRADE

4. Gottesman, A. Edward TWO MYTHS OF GLOBALIZATION (World Policy Journal, vol. 23, no. 1, Spring 2006, pp. 37-44)

The author notes that an economic discussion of globalization has often focused on two widely accepted, but mainly misunderstood, theories. First, China is the "next economic superpower". The growth of the U.S. in the nineteenth century, then an underpopulated, resource-rich country, during the Industrial Revolution bears no resemblance to the export-dependent growth spurt that China, with limited natural resources, has experienced since 1979. The second myth is that the current-account deficit the U.S. has run for a number of years (about a third from trade with China) is "unsustainable" and will result in some global economic catastrophe. The author writes that if we want to make sense of globalization, we need to re-focus our thinking about globalization by not comparing apples (the mature Western industrial economies) with oranges (the economies of what used to be called the underdeveloped countries, now designated as developing countries or newly industrialized countries -- NCI's, for short). In a global free market, the accumulated wealth and productive resources built up over three hundred years in Europe and in North America are the main source of financing, either directly or indirectly, for the growth of these NCI's. Debunking these theories of globalization requires an attempt to put the world economy in perspective so that one can understand the complex and often fragile process of globalization.

5. Maggs, John BUSH'S NEXT CRISIS (National Journal, vol. 38, no. 19, May 13, 2006, pp. 32-39)

According to the author, three crises have shaped the Bush presidency: expanding the power of the presidency, managing the insurgency in Iraq, and handling Hurricane Katrina. The next one could involve the global economy, as the risk of emerging-market financial crises may be increasing; Maggs believes that America's borrowing binge is the No. 1 threat to the stability of the world economy. Bush has embraced multilateralism on economic matters, and the International Monetary Fund has made data more available to the world. Despite Bush's uneven record in assembling an economic team and the challenges of his almost solitary approach to foreign policy, a number of factors suggest that his administration is well positioned to respond to a global financial crisis. As a candidate in 2000, Bush was skeptical of financial bailouts -- but as president, he helped Argentina in 2002-2003. Four years after Argentina defaulted on its loans, President Nestor Kirchner announced in 2005 that his country would repay \$9.8 billion lent by the IMF. At home, the U.S. has borrowed \$5.3 trillion from foreigners since becoming a debtor in 1977. Fortunately, international economic institutions and cooperation have remained strong under Bush, and he has hired some experienced people, such as Deputy Treasury Secretary Robert Kimmitt and Timothy Adams, undersecretary for international affairs, who have the confidence of international bankers.

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

6. Ivey, Bill; Tepper, Steven J. CULTURAL RENAISSANCE OR CULTURAL DIVIDE? (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 19 May 2006, pp. B6-B8)

Contending that America is on the threshold of a significant transformation in cultural life equal to the changes brought about by Gutenberg's invention of the printing press, the authors distinguish between those who increasingly are becoming producers of their own art and cultural experiences (using such products as iPods or TiVos) and those with less time, money, and knowledge who are left to the mercy of a few mass-media giants. With technology and economic change conspiring to create a new cultural elite and a new underclass, the former chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts and his colleague at Vanderbilt University challenge educators, artists, and arts leaders to create a cultural life that embraces all Americans.



7. Sciolla, Angelina ALL ROADS LEAD THROUGH AMERICA: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM (AAA World, July/August 2006, pp. 62-68, including sidebars)

A half-century after President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal Highway Act of 1956, thus launching one of the most ambitious infrastructure endeavors in U.S. history, the Interstate Highway System underscores how much America has changed -- much for the better, but not without a bit of nostalgia for the less complicated life of days long past. The 1956 legislation launched the construction of superhighways with wider lanes designed to accommodate higher speeds, with no intersections, traffic signals or rail crossings to interfere with the steady flow. Today, more than 46,000 miles of highway crisscross the nation, forming a system that includes 82 tunnels, some 14,000 interchanges and more than 55,000 bridges. Over the years, the establishment of this system has changed the tourism industry and vacation habits and led to the ubiquitous "week-end getaway" that has been embraced by the traveling public.

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